



Evangelical Friends Mission

July 2020 Prayer Letter

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Our purpose and passion is to fuel a worldwide movement of people who seek first the kingdom of God, planting churches that live and die to carry out the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment.

After returning from Ireland, last winter I expected to move to Ireland permanently in a span of a few months. God had other plans; he always does. At the end of last summer, I began what my team and I have come to call "The Plan." As a brief reminder, The Plan was developed in response to changes made to Ireland's immigration regulations especially with regards to a Minister of Religion visa, which is the visa I hope to obtain. My team and I decided the best use of my time would be to stay in California while I worked and trained for qualifications that would give me the best opportunity to receive the visa. The ways I've been working, and training include enrolling in Graduate studies at Barclay College online as a Pastoral Studies student, working as an intern at a local Asian-American church, Gateway Friends, participating in a rigorous discipleship training program, The Lab and meeting regularly with a coach who helps me to integrate all the pieces of The Plan. I am happy to report that the last year has been one of growth, challenges, joys, fierce honesty and community building. Unfortunately, the global pandemic has made applying for a visa to Ireland impossible. Ireland seized accepting new visa applications at the end of March. We have re-evaluated The Plan in the past few weeks. I will continue interning at Gateway Friends Church. I will continue meeting with my integration coach. The Lab has finished up for the year. I'm on summer break right now but will begin classes again at the beginning of August. Please pray for me as my team and I continue to walk this unknown road, to trust that God is in the midst of all of this.



One of the most important things that I've been learning this year is how to hold grace and truth together especially for myself. In almost every area of The Plan, God has revealed to me that I do not need to be perfect to be loved by Him. In fact, God loves me because of my brokenness, not in spite of it. The perfectionist tendencies I have manifested in my internship at Gateway Friends Church when I realized that I expected to be best friends with enough people right after my first Sunday on staff as an intern. I had not defined what enough people was or what best friends meant, but this self-imposed pressure loomed. They materialized in physical tension and awkwardness during conversations with members of Gateway's congregation which meant that I came home from Sunday morning physically and emotionally exhausted. One of the pastors sat down with me and asked me how it was going after a few weeks attending Gateway. We chatted for a moment about my anxiety and he said something so simple, "You don't have to prove yourself to us." I felt the weight of perfectionism and unmet expectations fall away. He went on to say, "The only expectation we have of you is to fall in love with Gateway." I felt such relief in that moment. The truth that I learned in that moment is that I am loved and supported by what were almost complete strangers at the time. The grace I learned to have with myself is to work towards believing that truth.

In the midst of this pandemic, it has become increasingly difficult for me to have grace and truth with myself. I struggle with the nation re-opening when there still isn't a vaccine. I want to keep all my loved ones safe, but I also want to see those loved ones in person. The Lab traditionally ends with a weeklong prayer retreat in the wilderness of Utah. The prayer retreat was scheduled for the end of May. We wrestled together as a community about the wisdom of keeping that trip on the calendar. My anxiety was especially at a maximum and I chose to investigate why that was instead of acting from a place of anxiety. After sitting in my backyard, because that was the only outside place I was allowed to be in at the time and listening to how God wanted me to make this decision, I heard the words grace and truth from my Heavenly Father. I needed to have truth which meant that I needed to know about the virus and how it spread, what the CDC guidelines are and what the state of California was allowing its citizens to do at the time. Since the beginning of stay-at-home orders, I had been avoiding the news because it was very grim and depressing. I began educating myself about the virus and especially about our state's different phases of re-opening. Holding grace for myself was a little harder because I needed to remind myself that I was doing enough to keep me and my family safe. I washed my hands, I wore a mask when I went to the grocery store, I stayed at home and I became a Zoom meeting expert. I learned to hold grace and truth for myself. The Lab decided as a group that a road trip to Utah in the middle of a pandemic was not the best way to keep us all safe. When the stay-at-home orders were relaxed, we began meeting in the Amavisca's backyard so we could physically distance. We held grace and truth together throughout that decision making process.

How do you hear God calling you to hold grace and truth together? The world and our country are at a turning point on several different fronts. I'd encourage you to make time to listen to how God is speaking to you in the midst of these turbulent times. Thank you for continuing to journey with me, the path we are taking could have never been predicted and I am grateful for your prayers, encouragement and support.

Molly Morton
Preparing to Qualify for a Minister of Religion Visa for Ireland

From the EFM Office

Praise God...

- After another month of the pandemic it appears that we are all still healthy (stateside staff, missionaries, national leaders, board members, etc.).
- The Lord continues to provide for EFM's financial needs. We are blessed by the generosity of his people in times like these.

Please Pray...

- For the Evangelical Friends Church-North America regions/yearly meetings that are having their annual gatherings this summer. The ones gathering in July are EFC-Eastern Region, Northwest Yearly Meeting, EFC-Mid America Yearly Meeting, and Alaska Yearly Meeting. Most of them are holding their sessions online, so please pray that that way of meeting together will go smoothly and be a blessing for this part of the body of Christ.
- For increased strength and wisdom for our missionaries and national leaders. The pandemic presents many challenges as well as opportunities for ministry. May those who lead God's people in times like these experience the easy yoke and light burden that Jesus promises.
- Continue to pray for the financial needs of not only EFM but your local church and region/yearly meeting. Please also continue to pray for our brother and sisters in Christ on other continents who are experiencing financial needs because of the economic effects of the pandemic. EFM is providing some assistance thanks to contributions to the emergency fund by people like you.

From Samson and Priscilla Retnaraj

Serving in Nepal

Praise God...

- For the safety and good health of all our families in Nepal during this pandemic of COVID-19 and the lockdown brought on by the government of Nepal.
- For the families who received blessings through the relief provided, as many struggled to meet their needs due to joblessness and migrated to their villages in search of options, and the security of their familiar surroundings.
- Prateek completed his first year in GFU and got good results academically. He is unable to come to Nepal for this four month vacation because of international flights being cancelled, and unfortunately does not have a job yet. But his college gave him an apartment to share with another international student from China so that he can cook his own food. They also provided WIFI services so that we can be in touch with him regularly.

Please Pray...

- For the families who came in contact with out CHE Trainers during these days of lockdown. This has been a good opportunity to teach health and hygiene lessons in rural communities, and the importance in keeping safe from CORONA and other related diseases which can be prevented by this simple hand washing technique and the use of mask.
- The situation caused by COVID-19 is slowly becoming worse in Nepal and is expected to peak with high number of casualties and people affected by this 'flu' like disease. Women in some churches are taking it as a challenge and making cotton masks and also hand sanitizer so that their communities can be safe.
- For the "Contact-less Hand Washing Machine Project" in Bardia which can be used by churches and meeting places. This will provide employment and also be a source of income to the local church whereby they can provide training to other areas to start a similar project and keep their people busy during these days of lockdown.

From Rupak and Pramila Tamang

Serving in Bhutan

Praise God...

- For one confession and four taking a public testimony of baptism.
- That our country is opening from lockdown.
- For the dedication of our granddaughter Grace Tamang, daughter of our son, David, and his wife, Ruth.

Please Pray...

- For a summer camp trip to Bumthang 25-29 July.
- For our annual general meeting 29 June to 1 July at Thimphu.
- For Babasa Friends Church repair from 5-7 July.

From Maria Giron

Missions Mobilizer for Hispanic Friends

Praise God...

- For the opportunities I had this month to reach out to pastors and leaders and talk about missions mobilization. A special thanks to EFC-ER for inviting me to be part of their Hispanic pastors' reunion through a video conference call. It was a special time to reconnect with these friends.
- For how the Lord is leading me to ways to connect with other Hispanic Missions Mobilizing Ministries. I am so thankful that God is leading me to meet other people that have passion for missions and a lot more experience in this field from whom I will be able to learn and make my ministry with Friends more effective.
- For our Vision Mexico 32 team. We are moving forward, we have written the vision and mission statements, and we are also about to finish writing the values. We have people committed working on social media and the website. There are three couples that are taking training to initiate the process to be the first ones sent out to start new Friends works as part of the VM32 project.
- For the invitations I had last month to share the Word with women groups through Zoom and chats.

Please Pray...

- That I would keep making even more contact with more Hispanic pastors and leaders. That I would be able to start mobilizing churches through providing online workshops about missions and to encourage them to get more involved in accomplishing the Great Commission by joining efforts with EFM.
- For our team to be sure that every decision we are making for VM32 project is being led by the Spirit of God. And to keep having unity among the team and be encouraged to continue working together.

From Abe and Diane Bible

Serving in Ukraine

Praise God...

- Our daughter Priscilla, who lives in Ukraine, just had cervical surgery here. She has been suffering with greater and greater debilitating pain over the years and restriction of activities. We are grateful for God providing this opportunity for her here.
- Diane is feeling better physically than she has for several months.
- We continue to get reports weekly of people being saved through the men Abe works with, despite the ongoing quarantine—which now has been extended until July 31.

Please Pray...

- Abe hopes to travel visiting the provincial superintendents (about 25) during July to build relationships first of all, and then to work with them to become spiritual leaders instead of administrators! Pray that these trips would come together and that there would be spiritual insights and growth through this endeavor.
- Abe is also working with several of the national church leaders. He is gifted in organization, but also has many insights after we have lived here for 30 years. They are trying to transition from traditional churches to churches which will actually impact their communities purposefully and will draw young people. A difficult process as most of you know! Pray as Abe counsels with them and helps them be more targeted with goals that are tangible.
- And if there was some rest in July—that would be really nice! We may not go away, but it is hard to escape 'work' when your office is at home. How easy it is to sit down to the computer to do something—and still be there several hours later! So we are seeking to be creative to get a healthy break from everything.

From B. and D. A.

Serving in Nepal

Praise God...

- We thank the Lord that even during the pandemic people are coming to Christ.

Please Pray...

- Pray for our preachers as they go in their villages from home to home taking the gospel.

**From Dave and Cindy Aufrance
Serving in Hong Kong**

Praise God...

- That the virus cases in Hong Kong has remained very low. Only 1,108 cases and four deaths. We are grateful that RiverGrace has been able to meet for the past four weeks.

Please Pray...

- Cindy and I have our tickets to return to the States on August 6. We officially retire at the end of July. Please pray for us as we prepare our shipment, mostly our personal affects.
- Please remember Pastor Tommy as we leave. We are leaving RiverGrace in his capable hands, but there are many challenges ahead with new legislation in Hong Kong that may affect churches and may give cause for a large exodus of people from the city.

**From Tony and Agi Frei
Serving in Hungary**

Praise God...

- That he helped us through the coronavirus period. In Hungary our church meetings and the other areas of our lives could return to the previous system.
- Our brothers and sisters in the Lord didn't lose their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The July wedding of Mánuel and Kinga became questionable due to the emergency, but it can be held in time just as they planned before the coronavirus.

Please Pray...

- For our pastor Géza's family (They live in Komló.) Please pray for his family to have their relationship with the Jesus Christ restored.
- For sisters Sara, Eva and Ilona. They are from our church in Pécs. Sister Sara and her daughter, Eva have been attending events regularly for some time but have not yet chosen Jesus as their Saviour. Ilona can't get to church regularly because of her health, please pray for her too.
- For Jonatan and his wife (Vivien). They are expecting their first child due August. Please pray for them!

**From Voicu and Ana Marian
Serving in Romania**

Praise God...

- For protection from sickness, and peace in the midst of great uncertainty. For re-opening of church buildings (with restrictions) and our freedom of worship.
- For good results of HS entrance exams for our students. The youth are eager to reconnect at our home on Sunday evenings.
- Several more ladies joined our Bible study we'll continue during summer. Being invited at Julia's wedding, a former student, in whose heart we saw God's Seed, after many years

Please Pray...

- For the Spirit's leading and creativity for summer ministries. We cannot do a traditional camp but hope to do a Day Camp/VBS. Voicu reconnected with six junior high boys who are eager to do shop during the summer, if permitted.
- For fruitful ministry while being legal. Pray for the fear of the Lord for the young and old, instead of any other fear.
- For energy and godly wisdom for unexpected visits, which are great opportunities. Certain visits turn into hosting and counseling in our home for several days.

**From David Thomas
EFM Whole-Life Discipleship**

Praise God...

- That "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14) Praise God that he is doing this now, in our time! The enemy intended great destruction on the earth through COVID-19, but God is turning it around so that he is glorified, and many people set free and brought into his kingdom!
- For the opportunity for the church world-wide to "stand in the gap," on behalf of their people to intercede for their communities and their nations.
- For this time when people world-wide are more open and sensitive to hearing his voice. May all the barriers holding people back from an intimate relationship with him be removed through this time of crisis and rest!

Please Pray...

- That God would guard our leader's hearts and minds with his perfect peace that passes all understanding as they rejoice in him, give thanks and intercede as the Holy Spirit leads them.
- Pray for believers around the world to come to know God as Jehova Jirah the one who provides for their needs! May he use his people to also generously reach out to their neighbors in need.

- Put COVID-19 under Jesus' feet! Declare his blood surrounding every virus worldwide, dissolving and destroying it! Pray for a release of Holy Spirit's creativity, insight and blessing over scientists worldwide who are seeking a cure to COVID-19.
- For Holy Spirit creativity and insight for government leaders, economists, businesspeople and everyone involved in getting world economies back up and running.
- For hearts world-wide to be softened and attentive to Holy Spirit's work in each one of them! Pray for believers to grow in their relationship with Christ! Pray for nominal Christians to come close to Christ! Pray for non-believers to be drawn to know Christ! Pray for a coming time of revival and for a great harvest of people coming into Christ's Kingdom!

Praise God (Thailand-Lahu)...

- That Chiang Rai has been able to stay COVID-free. Churches have started meeting together, and life is beginning to get back to normal.
- For the love, unity and strong sense of team that The Way Foundation (TWF) has. They have come through this time of crisis well and are reengaging with their work.
- Many of Thailand's hill tribe peoples have gone home to their villages where there is enough food and the forests are also close by to gather other kinds of food.

Please Pray (Thailand-Lahu)...

- For the TWF staff to use technology well, to keep working as they can (from home), to stay connected and encourage each other and the people they work with in the communities.
- For Solomon, Yosapa, Ben and Ja Bo as they look at how they can encourage village leaders in Ja Taw through this time. Ja Taw and Ba Mo are the neighboring communities where they are beginning their D4D work.
- For Mo Pa working in the village of Ja Sa Pa to have wisdom as he encourages a couple families in their young church. Pray for favor and blessing in their relationships with neighbors in the village.

Praise God (Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo (Uvira and Goma)...

- For Tertullien, Gerard and Augustin as they encourage D4D leaders in Rwanda, Burundi and Uvira and Goma in DR Congo. Tertullien has been encouraging leaders to take time to use the D4D lessons to disciple their children.
- For planning Tertullien and others are doing to help their D4D teams encourage leaders and others to get their family businesses up and generating income for their families again after so long without economic activity.

Please Pray (Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo (Uvira and Goma)...

- For wisdom for the local governments in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo as they seek to protect their people from the spread of COVID-19, and as they also seek to get their economies running again.
- For Pastors Lusungu, Manasseh and other Friends Church (CEEACO) leaders in Uvira, Congo (DRC) as they administer a project to build 10 homes for vulnerable, handicapped people and their families who lost their homes in the April 17-19 flooding which wiped out two whole neighborhoods. Pray for their health and protection, and for God's favor to rest on them as they serve neighbors in need.

Praise God (Cambodia)...

- For Scott and Andrea Sward and Elise Paty living in Stueng Treng. Praise God for their partnership with a YWAM team focused on the Kavet people group.
- We're thankful for few cases of COVID-19 in Cambodia.
- We're also thankful for the creative ways Cambodian churches have continued to worship Christ, encourage one another, and serve their neighbors during this global pandemic.

Please Pray (Cambodia)...

- Deeper intimacy with Christ for Scott, Andrea, Elise and their YWAM friends and colleagues. All fruitful ministry comes out of our "abiding in the vine," our intimacy with Christ. Christians around the world have found this COVID-19 pause a "selah" moment, a time to grow in their intimacy with Christ.
- Rainy season has arrived, but rains are still rather sporadic. Farmers are beginning to express a little concern. Pray for sufficient rain for this growing season these next few months and for a bountiful harvest.
- Wisdom in navigating (and helping churches navigate) ongoing restrictions related to COVID-19.
- Wisdom in coordinating the initial training of a Kavet Bible translation team.